

Plants for Dry Shade

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Types of Shade

Types of shade (from Great Plants Picks "Shade Guidelines and Definitions")

Light shade: four to six hours of direct sunlight every day; forest edges

Dappled shade: Two to three hours of sunlight filtered through the branches above; deciduous woods

Deep shade: Little to no direct sunlight; coniferous woods

Open shade: Exposed to the sky but with little to no direct sunlight. North side of house.

Shade Gardening Basics

Plants generally flower less in shade, have larger foliage, and need less water

Plants usually spread slower in dry shade

Changing the Conditions

Pruning

To prune or not to prune? Pruning exposes the soil to light and evaporation, allows weed seeds to germinate; safety first; International Society of Arboriculture, Plant Amnesty

Watering

Regular watering: Plants require supplemental water once per week during the dry season.

Occasional watering: Plants require supplemental water every 10 to 14 days during the dry season.

Drought tolerant watering: Plants only require supplemental water about once a month during the dry season after being established (typically two years of regular supplemental watering during the dry season).

Drought tolerant doesn't mean *never* watering; new plants will need to be watered until roots are established

Avoid permanent irrigation systems; use soaker hoses, sprinklers, hand water

Planting tips

Plant small in the fall, don't add topsoil under trees, don't bury root flare/buttress, don't bury trunk with mulch

Trees

Acer circinatum *Vine Maple*

Acer palmatum *Japanese Maple*

Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Gracillis', *Slender Hinoki Cypress*

Cornus nuttalli *Western Dogwood*

Rhamnus purshiana, *Cascara*

Taxus brevifolia *Western Yew*

Deciduous shrubs

Fuchsia magellanica and hybrids *Hardy Fuchsia*

Kerria japonica *Japanese Kerria*

Lonicera involucrata *Twinberry*

Oemleria cerasiformis *Indian Plum*, *Oso Berry*

Ribes sanguineum *Red Flowering Currant*

Symphoricarpos albus *Snowberry*

Vaccinium parvifolium *Red Huckleberry*

Evergreen Shrubs

Aucuba japonica and cultivars, *Japanese Aralia*

Cephalotaxus harringtonia *Plum Yew*, *Cow Pine*

Elaeagnus pungens *E. pungens* 'Maculata', *Silverberry*, *Elaeagnus ebbingii* 'Gilt Edge' *Gilt Edge Silverberry*

Fatsia japonica *Fatsia*
Garrya elliptica, *Silk Tassel Bush*
Gaultheria shallon *Salal*
Lonciera pileata *Box Leaf Honeysuckle*
Mahonia aquifolium *Oregon Grape*
Mahonia repens, *Creeping Oregon Grape*
Mahonia nervosa *Cascade Oregon Grape*
Mahonia x media *Hybrid Mahonia*: 'Marvel' is less prickly
Morella (Myrica) californica *Pacific Wax Myrtle*
Sarcococca hookerianna var. humilis *Dwarf Sweetbox*
Sarcococca confusa *Sweet Box*
Vaccinium ovatum *Evergreen Huckleberry*

Vines

Heronswood Garden
Holboellia sp., *Sausage Vine*
Hydrangea anomala subsp. Petiolaris, *Climbing Hydrangea*
Lonicera ciliosa, *Orange Honeysuckle*

Ferns

Dryopteris erythrosora, *Autumn Fern*
Adiantum venustum, *Himalayan Maidenhair Fern*
Polystichum munitum *Western Sword Fern*
Polystichum setiferum *Soft Shield Fern*
Dryopteris affinis 'Cristata the King' *Cristata the King Male Fern*

Perennials and Groundcovers

Acanthus mollis *Bear's Breeches*
Beesia deltophylla, *Beesia*
Bergenia cordifolia *Pigsqueak, Elephant Ears*
Dicentra formosa *Western Bleeding Heart*, many selections available including subsp. Oregana 'Langtrees'
Epimedium sp. *Barrenwort, Bishop's Cap*
 E. perralchicum
 E. peraldianum 'Frohnleiten'
 E. x versicolor 'Sulphureum'
 E. pinnatum subsp. Colchicum
 E. x warleyensis
 E. rubra
 E. grandiflorum 'Lilafee', 'Red Queen'
Eurybia (Aster) divaricatus *White Wood Aster*
Geranium macrorrhizum *Big Root Cranesbill*
Geranium x cantabrigiense 'Biokovo' *Biokovo Cranesbill*
Helleborus argutifolius *Corsican Hellebore*
Helleborus x hybridus *Lenten Rose*
Hosta sp. *Hosta, Funkia, Plantain Lily* (Try H. seiboldiana 'Elegans', H. 'Francee', H. 'Elvis Lives')
Iris sp. *Pacific Cost Iris*
Tiarella cordifolia *Foamflower*
Tellima grandiflora *Fringecups*
Trillium ovatum *Western Trillium*
Vancouveria hexandra *Inside-out Flower, Ducksfoot*

Books

Graham Rice, *Planting the Dry Shade Garden*

Beth Chatto, *Beth Chatto's Shade Garden*

George Schenk, *The Complete Shade Gardener*

Kenneth Druse, *The New Shade Garden*

Keith Wiley, *Designing and Planting the Woodland Garden*

Cass Turnbull, *Cass Turnbull's Guide to Pruning*

Web Sites

Far Reaches Farm (world's best nursery)

Great Plant Picks, "Made in the Shade"

Plant Delights Nursery, "Plants for Dry Shade"

Missouri Botanical Garden, "Problem Solver Plants for Dry Shade"

Xera Plants (use search function with keyword "shade")